

Integrating Digital Literacy: Adult Education, Technology Access, and the GED

Broadband RI is working with the Community College of Rhode Island, the RI Department of Education, the RI Adult Education Professional Development Center, TechACCESS of Rhode Island, the GED Testing Service/Pearson Vue, and the RI Department of State Library Services to expand digital literacy within the adult education system.

The world of adult education has embraced the digital age and is working hard to develop the processes and resources that will prepare adults for a 21st century world of work. Reports from several research studies on the US adult education system emphasize the importance of establishing content standards in adult education (<https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/CCRStandardsAdultEd.pdf>), coordinating and collaborating across agencies for improved workforce development (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/ten-attachment.pdf>), and further incorporating technology into adult education. In August 2013, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) will release *Connected Teaching and Personalized Learning: Implications of the National Education Technology Plan (NETP) for Adult Education* (AIR, 2013). This report:

“discusses the realizable implications of the NETP specifically for adult education and prioritizes the implementation of policy and practice recommendations for maximizing the potential of technology in adult education...the overall goal of this report is to suggest a framework in adult education to implement the mandates implicit in the NETP” (p.1).

The importance of technology and digital literacy in adult education is further exemplified by that fact that as of January 2, 2014, the General Educational Development tests (GED) will be fully computer-based, thereby necessitating that all adult education students and instructors reach basic digital literacy levels.

Broadband RI, based on its successful **Digital Literacy Curriculum** (<http://literacy.broadband.ri.gov/resources/curriculum/>) and Instructor Training in Adult Digital Literacy, recently completed pilot training for adult education personnel on two new curricula, **Internet Registration Skills for the GED® Test** and **Computer Skills for the 2014 GED® Test**. These curricula are designed to be maximally accessible for learners with diverse learning needs through the use of varied visual and multimedia supports, and the incorporation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and guidelines (<http://www.udlcenter.org/>).

Additionally, BBRI digital instructor training incorporates instructional strategies and approaches and technology access training in order to further prepare participants to address the varied learning needs of their students in areas of technology use and digital literacy.

In pre-test/post-test results from the pilot session held on August 7, 2013 at CCRI, participants demonstrated 42% improvement in their knowledge and skills to effectively instruct adults in target digital literacy areas critical for the upcoming 2014 GED tests. Results mirror earlier pre-test/post-test results of BBRI digital literacy instructor trainings that indicate significant gains in knowledge and skills in all components of the digital literacy curriculum (Dalton, 2013). BBRI continues to work with its adult education partners to expand training opportunities for adult education staff through the use of the newly designed technology-based GED curricula, in order to ensure that Rhode Island's adult education students will have timely and appropriate access and training in order to be well prepared for the new online GED tests beginning in 2014.

Contact Information

For more information about this project, contact Don Gregory, BBRI Digital Literacy Coordinator, at dlcoordinator@riedc.com or 401-278-9115.

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